

EVERLASTING LOVE REVEALED

NO. 2149

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn you.”
Jeremiah 31:3.*

THUS speaks the Israel of God. She seems to wake up as if she had long been asleep, and had forgotten a grand fact; a fact which she ought to have treasured up in her fondest memory. Suddenly startling into recollection, she cries, “The Lord has appeared of old unto me.” How strange that she should have forgotten it! Her spiritual lethargy had dimmed her memory, and caused her to feel and act as if it were not true, as if her God had never revealed Himself to her. Then she saw with amazement that notwithstanding all the heavy chastisement which the Lord had sent her, and notwithstanding all her backslidings, there was still a hope of mercy, no, there was the *certainty* of it, for the unchanging God had said, “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Are any of you forgetful or unaware of this sacred truth of God? Has it never occurred to you that God has spoken to His people? Though you are a child of God, have you been taken up with so many inferior things that you have let go the blessed memory of former appearances of the Lord to your soul? May the Holy Spirit awake you at this time! May there come a blessed awakening hour to your drowsy spirits!

This startling remembrance came to Israel at a time when her sorrows were very great, and her sins were greater, still. She had been wounded so that she was sick and sore; and she found no healing medicine, and none to bind up her wounds. In her distress she remembered not only her faults, but also the former lovingkindnesses of her Lord. She gathered from that ancient assurance of divine grace that her God loved her, still, and would return to her in great mercy. She dwelt with hope upon that divine assurance of irrevocable favor: “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” When earthly joys ebb out, it is a blessed thing if they make room for memories of heavenly visitations, and gracious assurances! When you are at your lowest, it may happen that *then* the God of all grace comes in and brings to your remembrance the love of your espousals, and the joy of former days, when the candle of the Lord shone round about you.

At the same time, it was not merely a time of inward sorrow, but a period of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, for Jehovah was speaking in tones of sovereign grace, and pouring forth great rivers of promises and seas of mercy. See the first verse—“At the same time, says the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.” Sometimes you pour water down a dry pump, and that sets it working so that it pours forth streams of its own, and so, when our gracious God pours in His love into the soul, our own love begins to flow, and with it memories awake, and a thousand recollections cause us to bring to mind the ancient love in which we before delighted, and we cry, “The Lord has appeared of old unto me.” It only needs a touch, this morning, of that pierced hand to make our hard hearts soft! If our divine Lord will only come by His Spirit, and visit us as we sit in these pews, the waters of love will flow within until the wilderness shall become a pool, and the dry land springs of water! Long may we have suffered a great decay of spiritual life, but we shall, on a sudden, be restored, and then our hearts will burn and glow with holy attachment to Him whose love has not changed, though we have so sadly fallen. God grant it may be so! May a renewed appearing of the Lord revive our joy in His appearing of old! While you are sitting there, listening to my words, may a still small voice be heard within your souls, melting your hearts, and causing you to say, “Yes, I had almost forgotten it, but, ‘The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.’”

May the grand discovery of everlasting love be made by many of you for the first time in your lives! Oh, for the surprises of Almighty grace! As when one in plowing stumbles on treasure hid in a field, and rejoices exceedingly, even so, may you rejoice in newly discovered love! Or if you know it already, may you feel its drawings for the thousandth time, and may it be to you still fresh and new, as though you had never felt it before. The visits of God's grace and the discoveries of His love to our hearts never grow stale! We can go over this heavenly ground again and again, and always behold new glories in it! May an overpowering memory of the Lord's love come over us all at this time, by the power of the Holy Spirit!

I shall handle the text, first, by calling your attention to *the marvelous appearing*—"The Lord has appeared of old unto me." Secondly, to *the matchless declaration*—"Saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love." And thirdly, to *the manifest evidence of this love*—"Therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn you." May the Holy Spirit be poured forth, anointing every word I speak with divine unction, and may this discourse be precious to His people!

I. First, consider THE MARVELOUS APPEARING—"The Lord has appeared of old unto me."

Here are two persons, but how different in degree! Here we have, "me," a good-for-nothing creature, apt to forget my Lord and to live as if there were no God; yet He has not ignored or neglected me. There is *the High and Holy One*, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and He has appeared to me. Between me and the great Jehovah there have been communications; the solitary silences have been broken, for "The Lord has appeared," has appeared "unto me." He has looked through the window. He has shown Himself through the lattices; "The Lord has appeared." Hundreds in this house of prayer can each one say, without doubt or hesitation, "The Lord has appeared unto me." Perhaps of late the Lord has manifested Himself to you as He does not unto the world, but even if it has not been so just now, yet there was a happy time, now in the old long ago, when you saw the Lord. This is a very wonderful thing, that Jehovah the eternal should reveal Himself to the creature of an hour; that the thrice Holy should speak to the greatly guilty! See here we have "the Lord" and "me"—and between these two, this is the golden link, an appearance in infinite love: "The Lord has appeared unto me." That the all-glorious should put in an appearance among His angels, and unveil Himself to Cherubim and Seraphim, I can more easily understand; but it is incomprehensible that the Creator of the ends of the earth, of whose understanding there is no searching, should visit *me*, a sinful child of man! Yet this which surpasses understanding is undoubtedly true. My brothers and sisters, we have enjoyed the supernatural; we have risen out of the region of materialism into the spirit realm where God dwells and condescends to commune with mortal men! We can say, "The Lord has appeared unto me." It was necessary that He should do so, for nothing but His appearing could have scattered our darkness, removed our death, and brought us salvation. It needed that He should appear, for nothing but a vision of His love could have won our hearts for Him, and delivered them from the fascinations of this present evil world. Tell it among the skeptics, and the earthworms. "The Lord has appeared unto me." I care not who questions it, for the results of His gracious visit are in my nature and my life! The event is recorded in the diary of my memory in indelible ink! But it is also written in my *soul*, and the experience of every day deepens the inscription! Is not this even as the Lord promised of old, "They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them"?

Do I hear some asking, How is this? I understand that God appeared to Israel, but how to me? Let me picture the discovery of grace as it comes to the awakening mind, when it learns to sit at the feet of Jesus, saved by faith in the great sacrifice. Touched by the Spirit of God, we find that the Lord appeared to each one of us *in the promises of His work*. Every promise in God's Word is a promise to every believer, or to every character such as that to which it was first given. When God said this or that to the saints of old, my soul, He said it to you! I read the word as first spoken to Abraham, Moses, or David; but in very deed each utterance is for me! What a discovery! This Bible is God's letter of love *to me*! No promise of the Word of God is for one individual only. Though the promise was whispered in one ear at first, that one favored person was the representative of all who have like faith. With what delight you will now read your Bibles, when you can see that in them the Lord has appeared of old unto you, and spoken words of love to you *personally*! Does the Word of God speak to believers? I am a believer, and therefore it speaks to me. Does the Word speak to praying men and women? I pray; it speaks to me. The

richest word in all that Book is as much the inheritance of the believer today as it was the heritage of David, and we may find the words of the Lord and eat them as the bread of our souls, as Jeremiah did, for, in this sacred Book, “The Lord has appeared of old” to each one of His believing family.

Furthermore, “The Lord has appeared of old unto me,” *in the person of His Son*. God came to each believer in Christ Jesus. God came in boundless love to each one of us as “Immanuel, God with us.” Towards each one of us He “took upon Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Listen, my heart! In His manhood and humiliation the Lord God appeared to you! On the cross your Lord Jesus showed Himself to you in love. Now you have found it out, is it not a glorious discovery? It was not only for the innumerable multitude that Jesus died, but for you, my soul, for YOU! I wish, beloved, we could always look upon Jesus as God’s embodied love to us; to us in particular. Will you take a faith-view of Jesus at this time as dying for sinners, and for *you* as a sinner in particular? Say, “Yes, 1,800 years ago and more, the Lord in the person of His dear Son appeared unto me in Gethsemane, and on Calvary as my Lord and my God, and yet my substitute and Savior.”

Since then, the Lord has constantly appeared unto us in *the power of His Holy Spirit*. Do you remember when first your sin was set in order before your tearful eyes, and you trembled for fear of the justice that you had provoked? Do you remember when you heard the story of the Crucified Redeemer? When you saw the atoning sacrifice? When you looked to Jesus, and were lightened? It was the Holy Spirit who was leading you out of yourself; and God by the Holy Spirit was appearing unto you. How long has it been? I hope I speak to some who have lately been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and to you this appearing is fresh as morning dew! But I speak to many more whose call by divine grace was long ago. It was “of old” that the Holy Spirit came into saving contact with your spirit, and drew you with the cords of love, and with the bands of a man. These past appearances have been eclipsed by others still more clear and full but, at the same time, as Israel remembered the first Passover as the beginning of things with the nation, so do you remember those first appearances of the Lord, for then you began to live! Some of us can remember where the Lord Jesus first met with us. Though it had been in the desert as with Moses, or by the brook as with Jacob, or by the city as with Joshua, or in the furnace as with Shadrach, we have forever reckoned the place to be holiness unto the Lord. Call it Jehovah-Shammah for the Lord was there!

Now, dear friends, we hold this appearance *in precious memory*; “The Lord has appeared of old unto me.” Many things are preserved in the treasure house of memory, but this is the choicest of our jewels. How gracious, how glorious was the appearance of God in Christ Jesus to our soul! God full of mercy, God mighty to save, God the salvation of His people; what a sight is this! There was nothing like it at first! There is nothing like it now! Nothing that has ever been discovered by us since has borne comparison in preciousness to that marvelous manifestation of the ever-loving God! Time may obliterate a thousand memories, but it can never wear away the recollection of the Lord’s appearances unto us!

This appearance came *in private assurance*. To me it was as personal as it was sure. I used to hear the preacher, but then I heard my God! I used to see the congregation, but then I saw Him who is invisible. I used to feel the power of words, but now I have felt the immeasurable energy of their *substance*. God Himself filled and thrilled my soul! Through and through, His almighty love pierced my heart. I know that some of you think that if God were to show Himself to you, as He did to Moses or Elijah, it would be a vast blessing to you; but the Lord’s *present* appearances are not a whit less comforting and establishing. Manifestations by His Word and Spirit are by no means second in value to those of a miraculous sort. In no case can God, who is pure Spirit, be seen by the eye—He is only known by our *spirit*, and therefore His spiritual appearing is all we should desire. Oh, the encompassing of divine love, when it wraps us about as a cloud enfolded the disciples upon Tabor! When the sacred hand of love grasps our very heart, we feel the heavenly grip and every part and power of our being is moved! God has an indescribable way of putting Himself into communication with His people through Jesus Christ, by His Holy Spirit, and when this occurs, they say, “The Lord has appeared *unto me*.” There is, then, no hearing and seeing for other people; “The Lord has appeared *unto me*.” Come, my brothers and sisters, shall we go back to that time of love when first the Lord said to us, “Live”? That

was a word, indeed! Then every word in the Bible seemed for *us*. When we went up to the house of God every hymn and Scripture lesson was for us. And when we heard the sermon the Lord manifested Himself in it to us. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me” was our daily song, for He had, personally, and of a surety, drawn near unto our soul and shed abroad His love there by the Holy Spirit.

I cannot help calling your attention to the fact that the Lord came *in positive certainty*. The text does not say, “I hoped so,” or, “I thought so,” but, “The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying.” She who spoke thus saw the appearance and heard the speech. Brethren, be sure about your spiritual experience! It would be a horrible thing to leave spiritual things a matter of question, or to regard them as visionary and uncertain. To me it is bliss to say, “I know whom I have believed.” My soul cannot content herself with less than certainty. I desire never to take a step upon an, “if,” or a, “perhaps.” I have often waited as to spiritual movements till I could find beneath my foot one of God’s shalls and wills upon which I could securely stand. I can never be content with the bare hope that I *may* be a child of God; I must have the Spirit bearing witness with my spirit that I am born of God. Give me infallible truth. I want facts, not fancies. O beloved, let your experience be made up of *facts*, and not of notions and ideas! Seek to use the plain, straightforward utterance of my text—“The Lord appeared of old unto me, saying.” If that is your case, you are happy. If it is not so, you are in an evil plight, for you are evidently without God and therefore without hope.

II. My second head is THE MATCHLESS DECLARATION: “The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” I do not want you, at this moment, so much to hear *me* and to consider *my* statement, as to *behold* the appearance of the Lord and enjoy for yourself personally and at once, the gracious assurance of heavenly grace.

Here is a word from God of *amazing love*: Jehovah says, “I have loved you.” Think it over. Believe it. Stagger not at it. If the husband should say to his wife, “I have loved you,” she would believe him—it would seem only natural that he should do so. And when Jehovah says to you, a feeble woman, an unknown man, “I have loved you,” He means it. This is no fiction. God means by love what we mean by it, only His love is higher, deeper, fuller, and holier than ours can ever be. Looking from His throne, the insufferable light of which your eye could not endure, Jehovah speaks in accents of fervent affection and He says to you, “I have loved you.” Get hold of this truth that God really loves you; that you are the object of the intense delight of the Host High; and what more would you have? God’s heart to you is Love! Be amazed. Be enraptured with this!

Note, next, it is a declaration of *unalloyed love*. The Lord had been bruising, wounding and crushing His people and yet He says, “I have loved you.” These cruel wounds were all in love. What? When He struck, did He love? “Yes, I have loved you.” What? When she was past human help and foul with sin? “Yes,” says He, “I have loved you.” “But, Lord, I have never been worthy of it.” “No,” He says, “but I have loved you all the same.” But, Lord, I have not been conscious of it. “I have loved you all the same.” But, Lord, I have run away from Your loving guidance. “I have loved you all the same.” God’s heart to His people is love, love, love, love, only love! Without beginning, without end, without measure, without change is the love of Jehovah to His elect. “I have loved you.” Oh, when I sat at home and tried to eat this roll, as the prophet did, it satiated my soul with fatness! I ardently wished that I might have voice and strength to tell out this blessed truth to you. And then I thought, Well, what does it matter if I should be faint and feeble, if they will only think of the text believingly; and get it into their hearts by present enjoyment, it may even be better that the preacher should be nowhere and the truth should be all in all. When we drink from the well we do not want the water to taste of the pitcher. If you have nothing from me I hope you will have the more from my Master. You will have no taste of me this morning, but only of this precious declaration of the Lord. “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” It is love, love only, love always, love perfect, and love to the uttermost.

This statement is a declaration of *love in contrast* with certain other things. Did you notice in the 14th verse of the 30th chapter, “all your lovers have forgotten you; they seek you not”? Let me sound those two notes in sharp contrast—“all your lovers have forgotten you,” but, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” What a difference between the false friendship of the world and sin, and the changeless love of God! You, being earth-bound in heart, have been going after your idols and they have all deceived you. You have been trusting here and there and your trusts have all betrayed you! But the

Lord Jehovah says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” You have provoked Him to jealousy by gods which were no gods, but He has never ceased His love. O friends, how sadly have we erred by spiritual idolatry! How often have we hewed out broken cisterns which hold no water and yet our God loves us the same as always! What a miracle of grace is this!

As for our love to Him, how fickle! We have been hot today and cold tomorrow. Our love has been an April day; warm sunshine and cold showers; but the Lord has loved us with infinite constancy, even with an everlasting love! He has never changed. He could not love us more; He would not love us less. “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” The contrast is very beautiful if we place over against it either the world’s love to us, or our own love to God. Jehovah, when He came to His people in Egypt, made Himself known as, “I Am that I Am”—the immutable God who abides forever the same. As such He has revealed Himself to us, for He is without variableness or shadow of turning. How sweetly does immutability smile on us as we hear it say, “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love”!

Thus, dear friends, our text is a word *of love in the past*; “I have loved you.” We were rebels and He loved us. We were dead in trespasses and in sins and He loved us. We rejected His divine grace and defied His warnings, but He loved us. We came to His feet all trembling and afraid, and He loved us and washed us and robed us. He loved us and therefore He saved us. Since then we have been earthly, sinful, changeable, unbelieving, proud, and foolish; but He has loved us without pause. We have been ill and racked with pain, but He has loved us. We have lost our dearest relatives by the Lord’s hand, but even in this He loved us. Everything has been in a whirl round about us, but He has loved us with fixed affection. Our life has been a strange labyrinth, but He has loved us and that love has been the clue of the maze. How sweet it is, beloved, to roll up the years gone by and put them away with this label—“Days of the lovingkindness of the Lord!”

The matchless declaration of the text is a voice *of love in the present*. The Lord loves the believer *now*. Whatever discomfort you are in, the Lord loves you. In this house, perhaps, your heart is failing you with fear, but the Lord still says to you, “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” “Everlasting” includes *today*. Things present are provided for as well as things to come. External circumstances do not change the love of God, nor will your internal condition do so. Has He not said, “I am God, I change not”? Everlasting love makes no leaps and jumps so as to leave out this day of trouble and that hour of temptation. Even at this dark hour your name is on the heart of your God.

The text is a voice *of love in the future*. It means, “I will love you forever.” God has not loved us with a love which will die out after a certain length of time; His love is like Himself, “from everlasting to everlasting.” If you will read the chapter through to the end, you will see how God was about to deal with His chosen. He says, “I will build you, and you shall be built.” “He that scattered Israel will gather him.” “I will turn their mourning into joy.” “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” These are outpourings of a love which goes on forever—

*“Father, ‘twas Your love that knew us
Earth’s foundations long before:
That same love to Jesus drew us
By its sweet constraining power,
And will keep us
Safely now, and evermore.”*

It is a joy worth 10,000 worlds to have this assurance sealed in the heart by the Holy Spirit! “I have loved you with an everlasting love.”

This is a declaration *of love secured to us*—secured in many ways. Did you observe in this chapter how the Lord secures His love to His people, first, by a covenant? Read the first verse—“I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.” See further on from verse 31 to thirty-four. The covenant is summed up in these words, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” And if it is so, the Lord’s love must, indeed, be everlasting. God has pledged Himself to His saints by a covenant of salt, “an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” The tenor of the covenant is, “I will, and they shall.” How my heart delights in this! God loves me with an everlasting love and He embodies that love in an everlasting covenant.

Further, this love is secured by relationship. Will you dart your eye on to the 9th verse and read the last part of it? “I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.” A man cannot get rid of fatherhood

by any possible means. Yes, though my boy should transgress and dishonor his father's name, yet I am still his father. There is no getting out of this relationship by any conceivable method and so, if, indeed, the Lord is unto you a Father, He will always give you a father's love. In your adoption and regeneration the Lord has avowed Himself to be your Father and has virtually said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." "The son abides always." "If children, then heirs."

His love is pledged again by redemption. Read the 11th verse—"For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he." Would you see the indenture of God's covenant love? Behold it in the indented hands and feet of the Crucified Redeemer! How shall Christ leave off loving His people when He has their names engraved on the palms of His hands? Redemption has sealed everlasting love. That spear which found His heart and set flowing its blood and its water has killed all doubts as to the eternal endurance of our Lord's love! From now on let no man question our Well-Beloved, for He bears in His body the marks of His everlasting love! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever; and His love to His chosen is at this time what it was before time began!

Once more, in this passage of the book of the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord certifies His love to His people in a very solemn way by calling heaven and earth to witness it. Let me read from the 35th verse. "Thus says the Lord, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is His name: if those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the Lord; if heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord." Thus are the laws of nature made to seal the Law of love! God, that cannot lie, thus makes the whole creation to be a guarantee of His abiding love to His own. I pray you, believe Him and be joyful in His house of prayer.

This is a declaration *of love divinely confessed*. The Lord has not sent this assurance to us by a prophet, but He has made it *Himself*—"The Lord has appeared." This declaration does not come through another tongue or lips, but the divine Lover Himself breathes His own love words to His chosen—"The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love."

Notice, that it is *love sealed with a "yes."* God would have us go no further in our ordinary speech than to say, "yes, yes"—and surely we may be content with so much from Himself. His "yes" amounts to a sacred declaration—"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love." He lifts His hand to heaven and He swears—swears by Himself, because He can swear by no greater—"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." beloved, feast upon this! I am very conscious of the feebleness of my exposition, but I am equally conscious of the great strength of the precious doctrines which I have set before you.

III. We finish, thirdly, with THE MANIFEST EVIDENCE. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn you." Here are *drawings mentioned*. Have you not felt them? We have not seen God, beloved, but we have *felt* Him drawing us. Oh, what tugs He gave to some of us when we were children! Do you remember when you were boys and girls, when you could not sleep at nights for heavenly drawings towards divine things? Do you remember, when you were alone in the country, how you would sit down under a hedge and cry—you scarcely knew why—longing for something better than you had as yet reached? Do you remember when the Lord Jesus drew you out of the horrible pit? Out of the midnight of despair? Do you remember how He drew you till He set your feet upon a rock? He drew you from spiritual death, from the corruption of sin, from the dominion of the devil! He drew you into life, love and liberty. He drew you to the foot of the cross, to the throne of grace, to the church of Christ! How well do I recall the hour when I was drawn to the place where I saw One hanging on a tree in agonies and blood—then and there I looked—and as I looked I lived! Since then the Lord has drawn me along the paths of duty and delight, of faith and peace, of love and joy, of hope and rapture.

These were *drawings resulting from love*. He drew us because He loved us with an everlasting love. Other drawings of divine goodness are resisted—resisted, in some cases, to the bitter end; and men

justly perish. But the drawings of everlasting love effect their purpose. If you have been drawn to Christ, it is because God loved you before the world began! Do not think the Lord began to love you when you began to love Him. Oh, no! If God loves you now, He loved you before He created the earth. If this day He loves you, He loved you when there were no days, but the Ancient of days. He saw you through the glass of His prescience and He loved you and predestinated you to be conformed unto the image of His Son—and from this purpose of love He will never turn aside. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance [change].” He will not alter the thing which has gone out of His lips.

Here are drawings mentioned—these were *drawings from God*. How sweetly, how omnipotently God can draw! When He begins to draw a man, that person may pull back and perhaps, even for years, may stand out against divine grace—but when the Lord puts forth His omnipotence the man is bound to yield. Without violating the will of man or making him less a free agent than he used to be, the lovingkindness of the Lord can act as a charm upon him and win him completely with his full consent. “Draw me; we will run after You.” He draws, and we run. When Jehovah would have Israel come to Zion, it soon comes to pass that Israel *longs* to go there. See in the sixth verse: “For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise you, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God.” We yield to the drawings because they come from the Lord’s own hand and their power lies in His love.

As the drawings come from God, so are they *drawings to God*. Blessed is he whose heart is being drawn nearer and nearer to the Most High. Naturally, we struggle back to carnal things; we get taken up with business, with family, and with a thousand groveling cares; but when the Holy Spirit draws, it is upward and heavenward! He draws us to repentance, to faith, to love, to holiness and to continuance in well-doing. Oh, that we may now feel divine drawings towards Him who is our all in all!

The Lord assures us that these are *drawings of His lovingkindness*. However He draws, it is in love and whenever He draws, it is in love. Observe that the church does not here say, “The Lord drew me,” but the Lord Himself says, “With lovingkindness have I drawn you.” God knows better about His drawings than we do. We think that He pulls and snatches in anger, but He knows that He has always drawn in lovingkindness! Because the horse is willful, it thinks the driver stern—our waywardness makes us think our Lord austere. The forces which He puts forth to work upon us are tender, gentle, kind and loving. He has drawn you and me “with lovingkindness.” I am sure He has thus dealt with me. Will you think of your own case and bless His name? Lord, You have drawn me when I did not know it. You have drawn me when I thought I was willingly moving of my own accord. I see it now and I bless Your name for it. Draw me, still, that I may still say, “Your gentleness has made me great.” What a wonderful word is that—“lovingkindness”—“loving,” “kindness”—two of the choicest jewels set side by side! Kindness is “kin-nedness,” and the Lord Jesus treats us as His kin—and He does this in the most loving manner. “With lovingkindness have I drawn you.” He might have whipped me to Himself. He might have dragged me to the city of refuge. He might have threatened me into repentance. He might have thundered me into submission. But no, “with lovingkindness have I drawn you.” I spoke to a brother in Christ, yesterday, who called himself—and I think he spoke the truth—“a specially favored one.” I take that title, also. Take it, my sister! Take it, my brother! Does it not fit you well? Has not the Lord been especially good to you? “With lovingkindness have I drawn you.” “Alas,” cries one, “but I have been whipped.” “You have chastised me and I was chastised.” Very true, but how few have been the strokes compared with what you deserved! “Oh, but God has rebuked me sharply,” says another. I answer, again, how few have been His chidings compared with what we might have expected considering our evil ways! Prevailingly His cords have been cords of love and His bands have been the bands of a man. Bless the Lord, O my soul! He leads me beside the still waters.

Only one thing more. *These drawings are to be continuous*. “With lovingkindness have I drawn you” and He means to do the same forevermore. If you will look the chapter through, you will see that God promises to keep on drawing.

See verse 8: “Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth.” Verse nine: “They shall come. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way.” Read verse 10: “He that scattered Israel will gather him.” See verse 12: “Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord.” He that has

begun to draw will go on drawing us till He has safely landed us where His everlasting love shall be our endless theme of song; even in heaven where we shall dwell in eternal fellowship with the eternal God! The everlastingness of divine Love is the crown of it all!

I would not care to preach to you a gospel which has no final perseverance in it. Spiritual life which can die is not the *eternal life* promised in the gospel, and heavenly love which can fail is not the everlasting love of our text! Whenever I find that doctrine left out, I feel as if they had taken away the wheat from the barn and the grapes from the winepress. If the salvation which you set forth to be that of Christ is a *temporary* one, you may have it that like it—I will have none of it! I believe in *everlasting* love and I can do with nothing less! My hope to get to heaven lies in this—as far as I have come on the road, the Lord has drawn me and He will draw me the rest of the way. I have had no strength of my own until now—I have had no might but what He has afforded me—and I look to the Lord, still, for all the grace I shall need between this spot and the gate of pearl!

Such a magnificent text as ours ought to make us consider two things. The first is, Is it so? *Am I drawn?* If God loves you with an everlasting love, He has drawn you by His lovingkindness—is it so or not? Has He drawn you by His Holy Spirit so that you have followed? Are you a believer? Do you carry Christ's cross? You have been drawn to this. Then take home these gracious words—"I have loved you with an everlasting love." If you have not been so drawn, do you not wish you were? Oh, it *would be* worth dying a thousand deaths to be a Christian after that fashion of Christianity which is based on everlasting love! Here is a glorious foundation: love without beginning, love without end; free, sovereign, unchangeable love! Not love bought by merit in *us*, nor produced by our efforts or entreaties; but love which comes to us because God will love and has chosen in His divine sovereignty to love *us*. "Everlasting love!" Why, the syllables are music! If you can climb that height, you have climbed where it is worth while to abide forever! O friends, if you cannot claim this, at any rate desire it, and go humbly on your knees to Christ Jesus, and look to Him and live!

But, child of God, if you know these drawings and if it is true that God loves you with an everlasting love, then *are you resting?* "I have a feeble hope," says one. What? How can you talk so? He who is loved with an everlasting love and knows it, should swim in an ocean of joy! Not a wave of trouble should disturb the glassy sea of his delight! What is to make a man happy if this will not? Come, come! We must have no more hanging heads. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! If the Lord has loved me with an everlasting love, I will not be cast down though the earth is removed! His love is better than wealth! His love is better than health (great blessing as that is)! His love is better than honor, better than usefulness! Everlasting love—and you have it! Man alive, wipe the tears out of your eyes and lift up your head! "Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him," for if He has loved you so, what have you to fear? What is to be done but to love Him in return who has loved us so much? One thing I know—

*"All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing,
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to my King."*

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Jeremiah 30:12-17; 31:1-14.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—220, 229, 748.

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